That night a wolf came near our bivouac. The Bedouins heard his call in the encircling mountains and rose in haste to gather the camels together inside the camp.

On the following morning, June 19th, we rose very early, for it was growing important to reach Makalla as soon as possible. The caravan was in motion at a quarter past four and we made a straight line for the sea coast, scrambling laboriously over granite boulders. By ten past eight we had reached Mēfaᶜ, a forlorn little village by the sea at the mouth of Wādī Ḥadjr.

The river here has shrunk till it is no more than a swiftly flowing stream. No doubt the major portion of the water flows underground to the sea.

The population of Mēfaᶜ dwells for the greater part in miserable shacks; the few mud houses are dilapidated and poor and dirty. The house where the soldiers live was opened for us; it was the best to be had, but still miserable enough. Only one soldier still remained; his companions had died of the fevers for which Mēfaᶜ has an unenviable reputation. Yāfiᶜ soldiers from the healthy highlands are among the least resistant to the fever of the damp, hot coast. When this soldier's last comrade died, he had fled from the house, not daring to live there any longer. No food was to be had from the villagers for love or money, but the soldier shared some of his provisions of rice and eggs with us. He told us that the people of the place are desperately poor and unhealthy. Emigrants come here, it is true, but they do not stand it for long, and only a portion of the arable land is under cultivation. The Qeᶜēṭī soldiers regard transference to Mēfaᶜ as equivalent to a death sentence. Their constitutions are not resistant against the endemic fever, they have not enough pay to feed themselves well, and the people of the village are so poor and miserable that nothing can be got from them.

Whilst lying in a corner of a little room, which smelt of indigo, I got a violent attack of cramp in the stomach, and it looked as if I should not be able to go further. Luckily the